

AMENDMENTS TO THE CLAIMS

The following listing of claims will replace all prior versions, and listings, of claims in the application:

Listing of Claims:

Claims 1-12 (cancelled)

Claim 13 (Currently Amended) A suction device for closures of sample containers, including a suction passage (1), a vacuum space, which constitutes a reservoir (2), and a blower (5) which produces, in use, a vacuum in the reservoir (2), the reservoir (2) having on its underside a closure flap (4) that is mounted with a substantially horizontal pivotal shaft (11) and has a counterweight (13) which is sized so that the closure flap (4) is held in a defined closed position when the reservoir (2) is empty, even without a vacuum, and so that the closure flap (4) is in a fully closed position when a vacuum is produced in the reservoir, and pivots, when the vacuum drops off, into an open position under a weight of one or more closures.

Claim 14 (Previously Presented) The suction device of claim 13 wherein the closure flap (4) constitutes a chute (7, 9) in its open position, on which the closures fall from the closure flap as a result of their own weight.

Claim 15 (Previously Presented) The suction device of claim 13 wherein the blower (5) is a radial blower.

Claim 16 (Previously Presented) The suction device of claim 13 wherein a filter (3) is arranged between the reservoir (2) and the blower (5), the filter preferably having a pore size which has a separation rate of about 95% at a particle size of 0.2 micrometers.

Claim 17 (Previously Presented) The suction device of claim 16 wherein the filter (3) is a filter cartridge that is inserted on a suction side of the blower (5).